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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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ARTICLE I.

THE TESTIMONY OF STATESMEN AGAINST WAR.

STATESMEN, more enlightened and humane than warriors, accustomed to take larger and juster views of the public weal, and more familiar with the virtues and blessings of peace, are more generally and more decidedly opposed to the custom of war.

EVEN MACHIAVEL, whose name long ago became synonymous with political chicanery, condemns the practice in very pointed terms. "War, being a profession by which men cannot live honorably at all times, is not," he says, "to be taken up as a trade, except by a commonwealth or a kingdom; and, if they be well constituted, they will neither of them suffer any of their citizens or subjects, or any other good man, to make it his business. He can never be thought a good man who takes upon himself an employment by which, if he would ever reap any profit, he is *obliged* to be false, and rapacious, and cruel, and to entertain several other qualities which are not consistent in a good man. Nor can any man, great or small, who makes war his profession, be otherwise than vicious. Have you not a proverb which confirms what I say, that *war makes villains, and peace brings them to the gallows*? Rome, while it was well governed, had never any soldier who made it his profession to be so; and hence few of them were dissolute."*

"War," said LORD BURLEIGH, "is the curse, and peace the

* As quoted by Thrush, in his Observations on War.

blessing, of a country. A realm gaineth more by one year's peace than by ten years' war."

LORD CLARENDON, the great historian of his own age, and eminent as a statesman and philosopher, is very full and decided in his reprobation of war. "Of all the punishments and judgments which the provoked anger of the divine Providence can pour out upon a nation full of transgressions, there is none so terrible and destroying as war. It is a depopulation, defaces all that art and industry hath produced, destroys all plantations, burns churches and palaces, and mingles them in the same ashes with the cottages of the peasant and the laborer. It distinguishes not of age, or sex, or dignity, but exposes all things and persons, sacred and profane, to the same contempt and confusion, and reduces all that blessed order and harmony, which hath been the product of peace and religion, into the chaos it was first in.

A whole city on fire, is a spectacle full of horror; but a whole kingdom on fire, must be a prospect much more terrible. And such is every kingdom in war, where nothing flourishes but rapine, blood and murder. We cannot make a more lively representation and emblem to ourselves of hell, than by the view of a kingdom in war.

It was a very proper answer to him who asked, *why any man should be delighted with beauty?* that it was a question which none but a blind man could ask. Nor can any man ask how or why men come to be delighted with peace, but he who is without natural bowels, who is deprived of all those affections which can only make life pleasant.

No kingdom can flourish or be at ease, in which there is no peace. It is only this which makes men dwell at home, and enjoy the labor of their own hands, and improve all the advantages which the air, and the climate, and the soil administer to them, and all which yield no comfort where there is no peace. God himself reckons peace the greatest comfort and ornament he can confer upon states.

A greater curse cannot befall the most wicked nation, than to be deprived of peace. There is nothing of real and substantial comfort in this world, but what is the product of peace; and whatsoever we may lawfully and innocently take delight in, is the fruit and effect of peace.

War breaks all that order, interrupts all that devotion, and even extinguisheth all that zeal which peace had kindled in us. It lays waste the dwelling-place of God as well as of man, and introduces and propagates opinions and practices as

much against heaven as against earth, and erects a deity that delights in nothing but cruelty and blood.

Are we pleased with the enlarged commerce and society of large and opulent cities, or with the retired pleasures of the country? Do we love stately palaces, and noble houses, or take delight in pleasant groves and woods, or fruitful gardens? All this we owe to peace; and the dissolution of peace disfigures all this beauty, and in a short time covers and buries all this order and delight in ruin and rubbish.

Finally, have we any content, satisfaction and joy in the conversation of each other, or in the knowledge and understanding of those arts and sciences which more adorn mankind than buildings and plantations do the fields and grounds on which they stand? Even this is the blessed effect and legacy of peace. War lays our natures and manners as waste as our gardens and our habitations; and we can as easily preserve the beauty of the one, as the integrity of the other, under the cursed jurisdiction of drums and trumpets.

That men should kill one another for want of somewhat else to do, seems to be so horrible to humanity, that there needs no divinity to control it. They who allow no war to be lawful, have consulted both nature and religion much better than they who think it may be entered into to comply with the ambition, covetousness or revenge of the greatest princes and monarchs upon earth; as if God had inhibited only single murders, and left mankind to be massacred according to the humor and appetite of unjust and unreasonable men.

It is no answer to say, that this universal suffering, and even the desolation that attends it, are the inevitable consequences of war, however warrantably soever entered into, but rather an argument, that no war can warrantably be entered into. It may be, upon a strict survey and disquisition into the elements and injunctions of the Christian religion, that no war will be found justifiable; and, at all events, what can we think of most of those wars which for some hundreds of years have infested the world, so much to the dishonor of Christianity, and in which the lives of more men have been lost than might have served to have driven infidelity out of the world, and to have peopled all those parts which yet remain without inhabitants? Can we believe that all those lives are forgotten, and that no account shall be rendered of them?

They who are the cause and authors of any war that can justly and safely be avoided, have great reason to fear that they shall be accountable before the supreme Judge for all the

rapine and devastation, all the ruin and damage, as well as the blood, that is the consequence of that war. We may piously believe, that all the princes of the world who have wantonly obliged their subjects to serve them in a war by which millions of men have been exposed to slaughter, fire and famine, will sooner find remission for all the other sins they have committed, than for that obstinate outrage against the life of man, and the murders which have been committed by their authority.”*

NECKER, the illustrious financier of France, expatiates largely on the guilt and evils of war. “With what impatience,” he exclaims, “have I wished to discuss this subject! How irresistibly has my heart been led to expatiate on the evils which are ever attendant on this terrible calamity! War, alas! impedes the course of every salutary plan, exhausts the sources of prosperity, and diverts the attention of governors from the happiness of nations. It even suspends, sometimes, every idea of justice and humanity. In a word, instead of gentle and benevolent feelings, it substitutes hostility and hatred, the necessity of oppression, and the rage of desolation.

What must be our impressions, if we add to the waste of property the calamities inseparable from war, and endeavor to form an estimate of the lives and sufferings of men?

In the midst of a council convened to deliberate on the question of peace or war, an upright servant might well have the courage thus to address his sovereign: ‘Sire, the war to which you are advised, will cost you perhaps eight or nine hundred millions; and even were victory every where to follow your arms, you will devote to death, or to cruel sufferings, so great a number of your subjects, that were any one who could read futurity, to present you this moment with the list, you would start back with horror. Your own people you are going to crush with new taxes, and to slacken the activity of commerce and manufactures, those inestimable sources of industry and wealth. If you are desirous of new subjects, you may acquire them without the effusion of blood, or the triumphs of a battle. A good government multiplies men, as the morning dews of spring unfold the buds of plants. What personal motive then can determine you to war? Is it the splendor of victories, or the ambition of a greater name in the annals of mankind? But is renown confined to bloodshed and devastation?’

In every situation where men are impelled by circum-

* Clarendon’s *Essays*, XX, XXI, pp. 236—253.

stances, neither their first choice, nor their first impulse, is to be considered in this argument. We must study their sentiments in those moments when, distracted by a thousand excruciating pains, yet still lingering in existence, they are carried off in heaps from the fatal field where they have been mowed down by the enemy. We must study their sentiments in those noisome hospitals where they are crowded together, and where the sufferings they endure to preserve a languishing existence, too forcibly prove the value they set upon their lives, and the greatness of the sacrifice to which they had been exposed. We ought more especially to study their sentiments on board those ships on fire, in which there is but a moment between them and the most cruel death ; and on those ramparts where subterraneous explosion announces, that in an instant they are to be buried under a tremendous heap of stones and rubbish. But the earth has covered them, the sea has swallowed them up, and we think of them no more. Their voice, extinguished for ever, can no longer arraign the calamities of war. What unfeeling survivors we are ! While we walk over mutilated bodies, and shattered bones, we exult in the glory and honor of which we alone are the heirs.

Let me not be reproached with having dwelt too long on these melancholy representations. We cannot exhibit them too often ; so much are we accustomed to behold in war, and all its attendant horrors, nothing but an honorable employment for the courage of aspiring youth, and the school in which the talents of great officers are unfolded ; and such is the effect of this transient intoxication, that the conversation of the polite circles in the capital is often mistaken for the general wish of the nation.

For my part, far from being apprehensive that I have displayed too much zeal for truths that are repugnant to so many passions and prepossessions, I believe these truths to be so useful, so essential, and so perfectly just ; in a word, I am so deeply affected by them, that after having supported them by my feeble voice in the course of my administration, and endeavored even from my retirement to diffuse them wide, I could wish that the last drop of my blood were employed to trace them on the minds of all.

This subject is of vast importance to every nation ; and it cannot be observed without pain, that war is not the only cause which multiplies the calamities of mankind. Another cause may be traced to that military genius which is sometimes the effect, and sometimes the harbinger of war. Several states

are already converted, as it were, into a vast body of barracks ; and the successive augmentation of disciplined armies will be sure to increase taxes, fear and slavery in the same proportion.

How much disquietude and remorse must military ambition have for its attendants ! In the midst of battles and of ruins, amidst the cinders of once flourishing cities reduced to ashes, from the graves of that field where whole armies are buried, a name may doubtless be raised, and commemorated in history ; but the dreadful traces of desolation which mark the progress of a warlike and victorious prince, leave no evidence of his enjoyment. I will depict such a prince in the zenith of his glory and his triumphs. Imagine him, after he has been listening to the flattery of his courtiers, and become intoxicated with their praises, entering his closet alone, and there holding in his hand the details of all the horrors of a battle. He reads attentively the recital, not with the calm curiosity of a mere inquirer who has nothing to reproach himself with, but as the author of such accumulated wrongs, for every one of which his conscience secretly upbraids him. What distressing reflections must present themselves to him, what gloomy thoughts assail him ! ‘ Who am I,’ he is compelled to say, ‘ who am I, that I should command so many ravages, and cause so many tears to flow ? Born to be the benefactor, I am the scourge of mankind. Is this the use to which I should appropriate the treasures at my disposal, and which I should make of the power entrusted to my hands ? Either there is no order in the universe, and morality is a mere fiction, or I shall have hereafter to give an account for all this ; and what will that account be ? ’

Look at the closing scene of a sovereign whose views had been influenced only by ambition, and the love of war. How often does this last moment appear terrible to him ! Of what use his most glorious exploits ! Weighed down by age and sickness, encurtained with the shades of death, and anxious to chase away the melancholy reflections which haunt him, does he now command his attendants to entertain him with a recital of his victorious battles ? Does he order those trophies to be spread before him on which he might still discern the tears that watered them ? No ; all these ideas terrify and distract him. *I have been too fond of war*, was the last speech of a most powerful king ! Regrets that came too late to calm the agitations of his soul, or repair the evils he had done.” *

* Necker on the Administration of Finances in France, chaps. 34, 35.